

existence; while its value is clearly in proportion to the facility, of the learner in applying it to its practical purposes. The first object of instruction, therefore, should be to present, in a clear and distinct light, what is to be learned; and to address it directly to the understanding of the learner; and, in the next place, when knowledge is acquired, it should be made available to the possessor, by learning to apply it to practical purposes. There is in this respect, a radical defect in the education of most children; they are not made to study understandingly; and to apply what they learn to practice; their knowledge is too apt to be mechanical—a mere matter of rote, lodged only in the memory. To remedy this defect, in the common mode of education, is the chief object of what is called the "*Pestalozzian* method, which consists in exercising the reasoning faculties, more than is done by the ordinary plan of instruction; and in making the process of learning much less a matter of rote. This it effects by the exclusion of all books, and an entire reliance upon explanation and examination in the teachers presence. This, however, may be justly considered an extreme which ought to be avoided; but the common method is not less an extreme, on the other hand. In the pestalozzian method, study is the constant exercise of the inventive faculties, being nothing else than a kind of dialogue between the teacher and his pupil, suggested by the actual or supposed presence of some real object; while, in the common method, little or no exercise of invention is required; every thing is learned from books, and if their contents be well rehearsed, or the problems they contain be solved, according to the given rules, the pupil is thought to have done his duty—as to the application of his knowledge to actual practice, that is rarely considered as a necessary part of education, but is commonly left for him to see to himself, in after life, when he enters the world as a man of business. In the former system every thing depends on practice alone; in the latter, on theory. To preserve a middle course, by combining the practice and theory together, is doubtless the perfection of education. The books used in the common schools, are necessary to secure more correct information than can be expected from the extemporaneous conversations of the teacher, in the Pestalozzian plan. But when the knowledge they contain is learned, however accurately, by the pupil unless he can apply it to cases, as they occur in practice, it will avail him but little; he will indeed have learned, but without knowing how to use it, his learning will be without value. Knowledge and the application of